Lincoln Fire Department Driving Training

1/5/2005 DRIVER.PPT 1

Attached you will find the drivers rodeo required training lesson plan.

The topic is "*Driving Practical*". Please complete the checklist and return to the Training Division when you have completed the lesson. The drivers rodeo course is marked out at NS 12 & Kingbird road. The cones will be stored at station #14.

When your crew is ready to complete the practical portion of the training ,

YOU MUST!!

Schedule it through Captain McKay (1-8356). You will have to set up and put away the cones when not in use for the exercise.

Note: The serpentine course must be driven without stopping.

All Employees Must Participate!!! You need to drive your apparatus and an ambulance.

YOU MUST!!! Fax roster and skills sheets to 1-8798.

You must watch the required video and send a separate roster from the drivers practical one. Please tape if you will be gone.

LFR Driver Training Purpose & Goal

- Purpose; Driver training is designed to provide skills to all personnel at the company level
- Goal; LFR personnel shall describe and demonstrate knowledge, safe operation, and responsibilities of an FAO for LFR apparatus.

1/5/2005 DRIVER.PPT 2

Purpose: This required training is designed to provide training to all FF at the company level. This lesson will be on safe handling of the apparatus. Among these elements are the driving rodeo, driving regulations, driving under emergency conditions, positioning and spotting, and general responsibilities of the driver.

Study Information: IFSTA Pumping Apparatus, 7th Ed., Chapter 2,

Aerial Apparatus 1st Ed., Chapter 2, Supplement to the Essentials (found on line)

Defensive Driving Video (Station library)

Attached driving rodeo explanations and pictures.

LFD MPs.; MP 859.60, MP 855.03, MP 852.12, MP 850.02

Goal: The firefighter given a presentation on apparatus operation based on IFSTA Aerial and pumping apparatus and LFD policies, shall describe and demonstrate knowledge and application of LFD apparatus handling and general knowledge about responsibilities of an FAO to the satisfaction of the captain.

LFR Driver Training Objectives

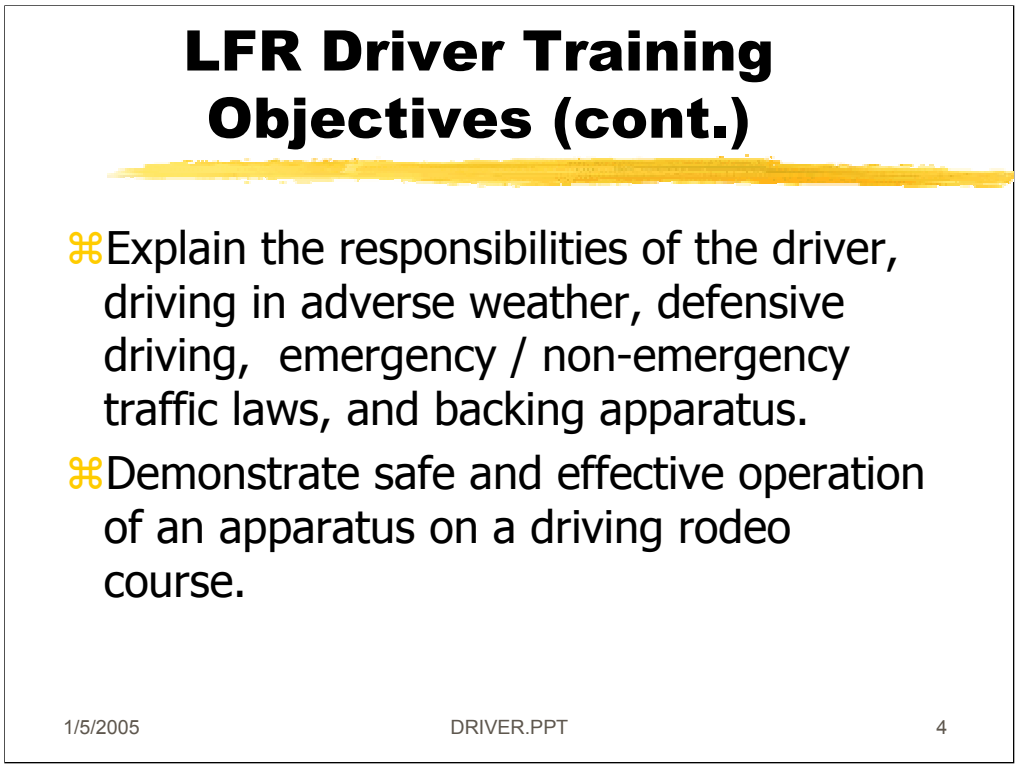
- Demonstrate the ability to safely drive apparatus in non-emergency situations while observing all driving regulations.
- Explain safe and effective spotting of apparatus .
- Explain the use of warning devices used on apparatus.

Objectives:

1. The firefighter, after reviewing the information and receiving practical training, will be able to drive the apparatus in non-emergency situations in a safe manner while observing all driving regulations.

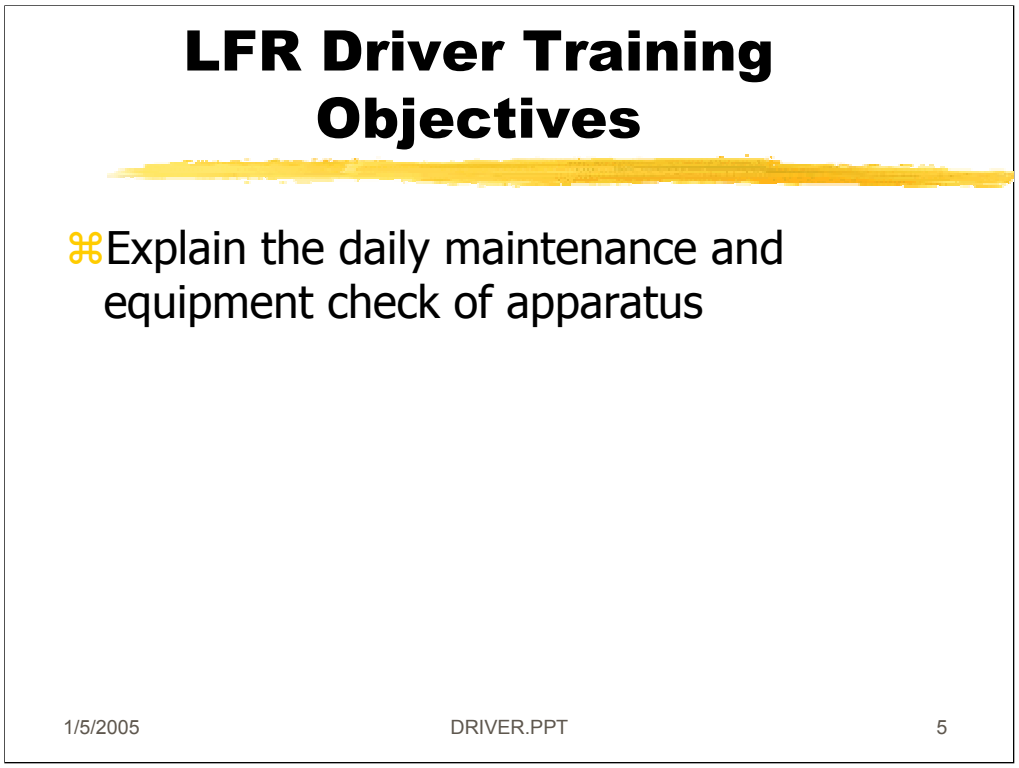
2. The firefighter, after studying the information and discussions with peers, shall be able to explain spotting and positioning of the apparatus at various incidents such as, structural fires, medical responses, car fires, haz/mat responses, marking a hydrant, etc.

3. The firefighter, after studying the information and discussing it with peers, shall be able to explain the use of warning devices used on the apparatus - lights, sirens, horns, spotlights, Opticom, and etc.



4. The firefighter, after studying the information, shall be able to explain safe driving practices. This includes general responsibilities of the driver, driving in adverse weather conditions, defensive driving, traffic laws for the apparatus - emergency and non-emergency, and rules in backing the apparatus.

5. The firefighter, after reviewing the driving rodeo attachment, will be able to demonstrate proper and safe handling and maneuvering of the fire apparatus.



6. The fire fighter, after a presentation, shall have a knowledge of the general maintenance of the apparatus.

LFR Driver Training Summery

- Operating Emergency Vehicles
- Driving Regulations
- General Responsibilities
- Starting / Shutting off
- Parking Brake
- Gauges / Switches
- Non-Emergency Driving
- Emergency Driving
- Spotting Apparatus
- Emergency Response
- Apparatus Maint.
- Components
- Warning Devices

LFR Driver Training Summery

- Adverse Weather
- Traffic Laws
- Use of Mirrors
- Safe and Controlled Driving.
- LFR Management Policies
- Practical Demonstration
  - Driving Rodeo

Operating Emergency Vehicles

- The FAO responsibilities.
  - Safely control and maneuver the apparatus.
  - Safety of Personnel
  - Placement of App.
  - Operation of Equip.

I. Operating Emergency Vehicles

A. The fire apparatus operator must be able to safely control and maneuver the fire apparatus.

B. The driver is also responsible for:

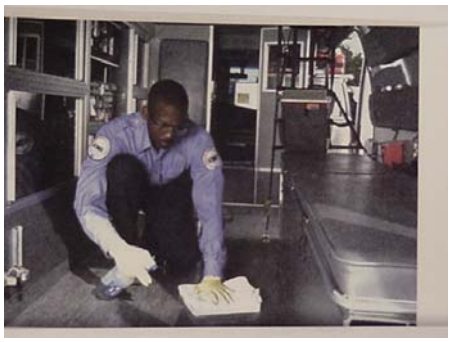
-safety of any personnel riding on the apparatus

-proper placement of apparatus

-proper operation of equipment

Operating Emergency Vehicles

- FAO must be trained!
  - Hose lays, Pumps, Fire Streams, Equip. Problems.
  - Apparatus Placement
  - Medical Equipment, Clean Up & Disinfectant.



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C. The driver must be thoroughly trained in:

-techniques of laying hose

-pump hook up

-pump operations

-developing fire streams

-detecting pump malfunctions

Operating Emergency Vehicles

- FAO knowledgeable in;
  - Traffic Regulations
  - Safe Driving Practices
  - General Care and Maintenance.

D.To qualify as a driver, a firefighter must be knowledgeable about:

-traffic regulations

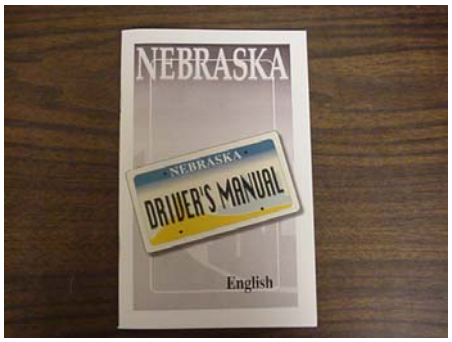
-safe driving & techniques

-spotting apparatus

-general apparatus care and maintenance

Driving Regulations

- FAOs Are Regulated by;
  - State Law
  - City Ordinances
  - LFD Mps & Practices.



2. Driving Regulations

A. Drivers are regulated by state laws, city ordinances, and department policies.

FAO General Responsibilities

- Operation & Care
- Safe Control of Apparatus.
- Traffic Regulations
- Daily Maintenance
- Employee Safety
- KSAs on MPs

3. General Responsibilities of the Driver

A. Efficient operation & care of the apparatus

B. Safely control & maneuver the fire apparatus

C. Traffic regulations

D. Apparatus maintenance

E. Safety of firefighters in the apparatus

F. MP's on driving

Starting & Shutting Off

- Battery Switch
- Ignition
- Auxiliary Equipment

4. Starting & Shutting Off Apparatus

A. Battery switch location

B. Ignition key or switch location and use

Parking Brakes

- Set and Release Brakes
- Check Emergency Brake Process

5. Parking Brake

A.Set and release of brakes

B.Check Emergency brakes-- engage while rolling slowly, in drive.

Gauges and Switches

- Identify What Each Gauge And Switch Is Used For!

6. Gauges and Switches in the Apparatus

A. Name and explain what each is for

-Example: fuel gauge shows fuel level

Non-Emergency Driving

- Practice Driving Skills
- Defensive Driving Considerations.
- Use OF Mirrors

7. Non-Emergency Driving - Practical

A. Practice driving

B. Discuss things to watch for

C. Use of mirrors

Use Safe Driving Practices

- Abide By Traffic Regulations.
- Practice With Spotters
  - Backing Up

D. Use safe driving techniques

- Abide by traffic regulations
- Practice backing up with spotters

Driving Rules & Techniques

- Seat Belts
- Adjustment of Mirrors and Seats
- Use of Mirrors
- Controlling Emotions
- Following other Apparatus
- Scan Traffic

8. Driving rules and techniques - Practical & Discussion

A. Use of seatbelts

-every passenger must use them

B. Adjustment of seat and mirrors

-do this before leaving station

C.Use of mirrors

- check frequently

- look for tailgaters and vehicles to each side

D. Controlling emotions

- be calm when driving

E. Following other apparatus

- 300' - 500' behind other apparatus

F. Scanning Traffic

-do not stare, scan traffic, see the big picture

Driving Rules & Techniques (cont.)

- Use of Brakes
- Hands on Steering Wheel
- Emergency Driving
- Proceed Through Stop Light.
- Traffic at intersection
- Driving Against Traffic

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G. Use of brakes

-air brakes-non-ABS-pump brakes, do not stand on them.

-air brakes with ABS-firm steady pressure, brakes will not cause tires to skid, be aware that stopping distance may be longer than normal.

-fluid ABS (ambulance)-apply firm steady pressure, brakes will not cause tires to skid-be aware stopping distance might be longer than normal.

H. Hands on the steering wheel

-both hands on the wheel when driving

I. Traffic laws

-unless it's an emergency, you must obey all traffic laws

J. Emergency driving

-Use of Lights, Sirens and Horns

-drive with headlights on

-in emergency, drive with lights, sirens and horns

-Proceeding Through Stop Signs and Red Lights

-must slow or stop until safe to proceed

-Traffic at Intersection

-make sure all traffic is stopped when proceeding through intersections

-Driving Against Traffic

-may drive against traffic in an emergency

Driving Rules & Techniques (cont.)

- Braking Distances
- Center of Gravity of Apparatus
- Passing School Buses
- Crossing Rail Road Crossings.
- Opticom

- Braking Distances

- Be aware of your rig's braking distances

- Excessive speed increases braking distance

- Center of Gravity of Apparatus

- Drive under control on turns & corners to prevent roll overs or fish tailing

- Passing School Buses

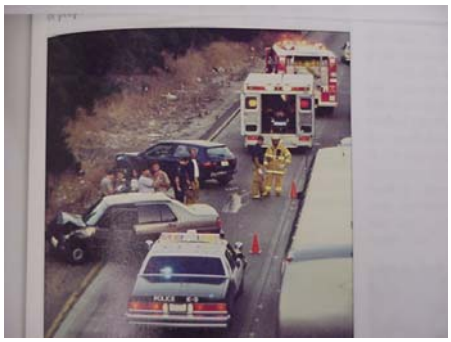
- When stop arm is down, do not pass until police or bus driver motion you to do so

- Opticom

- It takes time for the Opticom to cycle so speeding to a red light does no good. You will have to slow down anyway.

Spotting Apparatus

- Car Fires
- Structure Fire
- Medical Emergency
- Vehicle Accident
- Making a Hydrant
- Connecting to Standpipe
- Grass Fire
- Inspections
- Welfare Check



9. Spotting & Positioning Apparatus at Various Emergencies

A. Car fire

- Upwind, if possible, block traffic by angling rig

B. Structure fire

- Pull past front of structure, allow room for truck company

C. Medical in a residence

- Stop near front of residence, leave room for ambulance

D. Vehicle Accident

- Angle rig to block traffic from the accident

E. Making a hydrant

- Stop in proximity to hydrant, with rear of rig just past hydrant

F. Hooking up to stand pipes or sprinklers

- Stop in proximity of hook ups

G. Other emergency/non-emergencies

- Grass Fire
- Upwind, out of danger from the fire
- Inspections
- Park where the rig will not impede traffic
- Welfare Check In front of address

Use Of Lights and Sirens

- During Emergencies
  - Headlights, Flashing Lights, Strobe Lights, etc.
  - Sirens
  - Air Horns,
  - Spot Lights

10. Use of Lights & Sirens - Emergency Response

A. When responding to an emergency, headlights should be on, flashing lights on and strobe lights on.

B. Sirens should be on. The captain can fluctuate the siren sound to help clear traffic

C. The horn is used to help clear traffic, especially at intersections

D. The spotlight can be used to clear traffic by shining it in the rearview mirror to get the drivers' attention.

Daily Maintenance

- Daily Checks
- Washing the Apparatus
- Weekly and Monthly Checks

11. Apparatus Maintenance

A. Daily -

- Battery Check
- Braking System
- Fuel Level
- Foam Tank
- Cooling System
- Electrical System/lights
- Booster Tank
- Pump
- Oil Level
- Tire Check
- Hydraulic System - if applicable

B. Washing the apparatus

C. Weekly & periodic maintenance-discuss with the driver

Pump Panel

- Components Of The Pump Panel

12. Components of Pump Panel

A. Review pump panel with driver and/or other firefighters

B. Review names and functions of each component

Equipment Warning Devices

- Lights, Back up Beepers, Low Air Buzzer, Open Door Lights.

13. Warning Devices and Uses

A. Review all of the warning devices the apparatus has and how to use them

B. Review when to use each warning device

C. Include: Lights, backing up beeper, low air buzzer, open door light, spot lights, sirens, etc.

Adverse Weather Conditions

- Types Of Adverse Weather
- Apparatus Problems due to AW
- Slide Techniques
- Braking During AW
- Freezing Weather Problems
- Defroster and Wipers

14. Driving in Adverse Weather Conditions

A. Discuss what adverse weather conditions could exist

B. Discuss possible apparatus problems caused by weather

C. Discuss techniques in controlling the apparatus in a slide

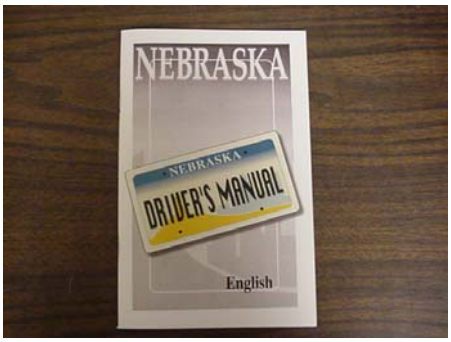
D. Discuss braking on wet, icy, or snow packed roads - pump brakes-air brakes, ABS-firm steady pressure

E. Discuss reduced braking distances

F. Discuss keeping the pump from freezing up in cold weather

G. Discuss use of defroster and windshield wipers

Traffic Laws
Non-Emergency



- Non-Emergency Obey All Laws.
- Emergency Laws.

15. Traffic Laws-Emergency & Non-Emergency Situations

A. Non-Emergency - obey all traffic laws because the apparatus is just another vehicle on the road

B. Discuss Traffic Laws

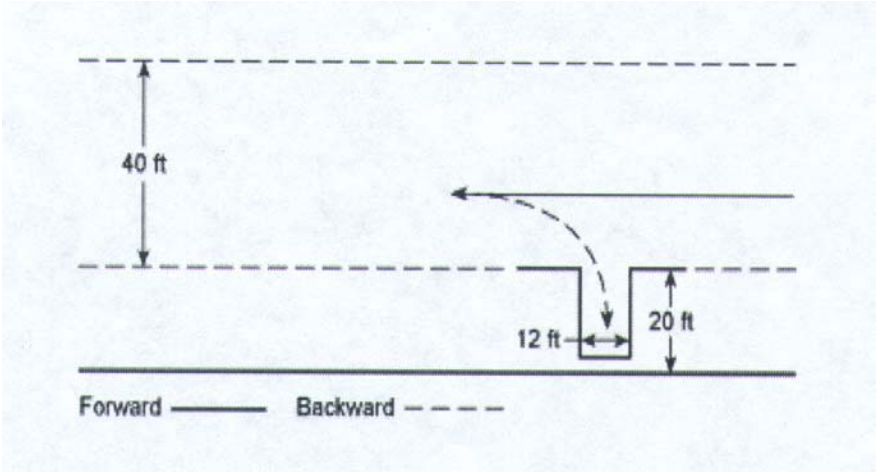
C. Emergency -

- Discuss what traffic laws can be broken and what laws must be followed
- Discuss situations where you would break traffic laws and why
- Discuss cautions used when breaking traffic laws

LFD
Management Policies

- MP 859.60
  - Apparatus Driving
- MP 855.03
  - Apparatus Backing
- MP 852.12
  - Apparatus Response
- MP 850.02
  - Accident Report Kit

Alley Dock Exercise
Fig A 2-3.2-a



A-2-3.2

The alley dock exercise can be used as practice for or in the evaluation of this requirement. This exercise measures a driver's ability to drive past a simulated dock or stall, back the apparatus into the space provided, and stop smoothly. A dock or stall can be simulated by arranging barricades 40 ft (12.2 m) from a boundary line. These barricades should be 12 ft (3.66 m) apart, and the length should be approximately 20 ft (6.1 m). The driver should pass the barricades with the dock on the left and then back the apparatus, using a left turn, into the stall. The exercise should then be repeated with the dock on the right side, using a right turn. [See Figure A-2-3.2(a).]

[See Figure A-2-3.2(a).]

Serpentine Exercise
Fig A-2-3.3

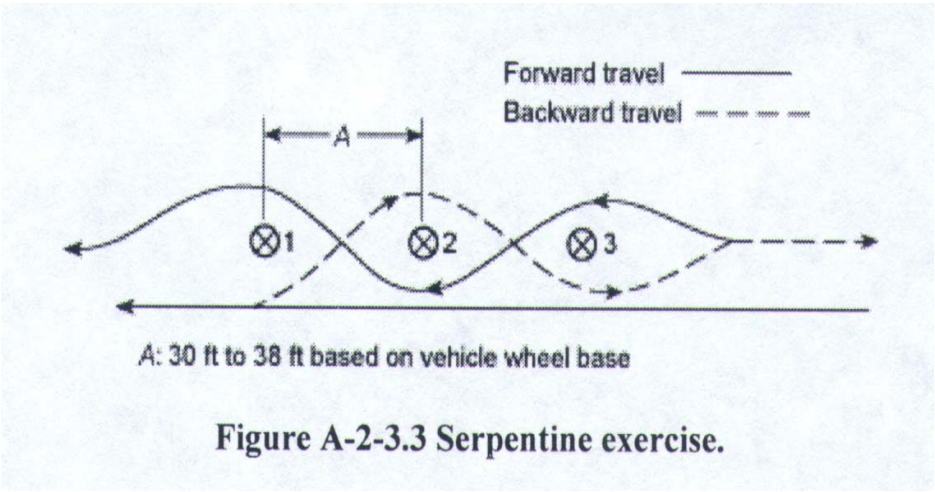
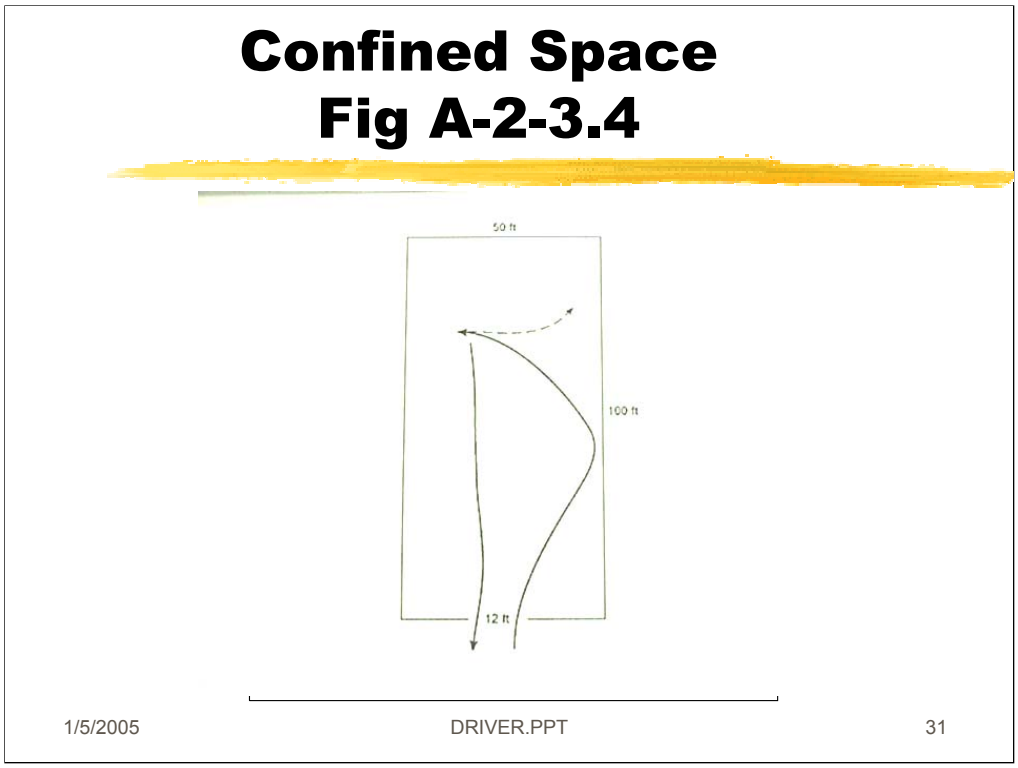


Figure A-2-3.3 Serpentine exercise.

The serpentine exercise can be used as practice for or in the evaluation of this requirement. This exercise measures a driver's ability to steer the apparatus in close limits without stopping. The exercise should be conducted with the apparatus moving first backward, then forward. The course or path of travel for this exercise can be established by placing a minimum of three markers, each spaced between 30 ft (9 m) and 38 ft (12 m) apart, in a line. The spacing of the markers should be based on the wheel base of the vehicle used. Adequate space must be provided on each side of the markers for the apparatus to move freely. The driver should drive the apparatus along the left side of the markers in a straight line and stop just beyond the last marker. The driver then should back the apparatus between the markers by passing to the left of marker No. 1, to the right of marker No. 2, and to the left of marker No. 3. At this point, the driver should stop the vehicle and then drive it forward between the markers by passing to the right of marker No. 3, to the left of marker No. 2, and to the right of marker No. 1. (See Figure A-2-3.3.)



A-2-3.4

The confined space turnaround can be used as practice for or in the evaluation of this requirement. This exercise measures the driver's ability to turn the vehicle around in a confined space without striking obstacles. The turn is accomplished within an area 50 ft x 100 ft (15.25 m x 30.5 m). The driver moves into the area from a 12-ft (3.66-m) opening in the center of one of the 50-ft (15.25-m) legs, turns the vehicle 180 degrees, and returns through the opening. There is no limitation on the number of times the driver has to maneuver the vehicle to accomplish this exercise, but no portion of the vehicle should extend over the boundary lines of the space. (See Figure A-2-3.4.)

Diminishing Clearance
Fig A-2-3.5

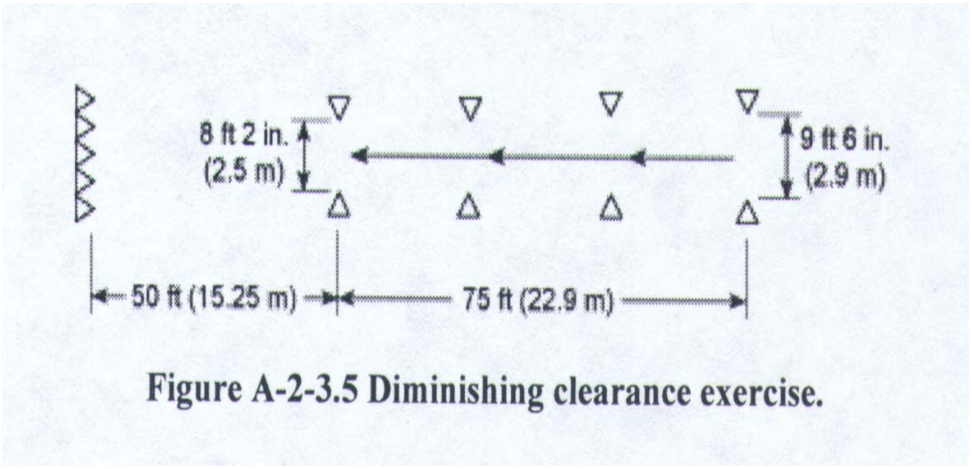


Figure A-2-3.5 Diminishing clearance exercise.

The diminishing clearance exercise can be used as practice for or in the evaluation of this requirement. This exercise measures a driver's ability to steer the apparatus in a straight line, to judge distances from wheel to object, and to stop at a finish line. The speed at which a driver should operate the apparatus is optional, but it should be great enough to necessitate quick judgment. This exercise is to be performed both forward and in reverse with a spotter. The course for this exercise is created by arranging two rows of markers to form a lane 75 ft (22.9 m) long. The lane varies in width from 9 ft 6 in. (2.9 m) to a diminishing clearance of 8 ft 2 in. (2.5 m). The driver should maneuver the apparatus through this lane without touching the markers. The vehicle should be stopped at a finish line 50 ft (15.25 m) beyond the last marker. No portion of the vehicle should protrude beyond this line. Vertical clearance judgment should be evaluated using a prop with a crossbar that is adjustable, based on the vehicle height. During the evaluation, the driver should drive forward and back through the prop with the crossbar at several differing heights, including one that is lower than the top of the vehicle. The prop should not be struck. The intent of the vertical clearance judgment is for proper identification of the furthermost point in the form of the apparatus. In situations where the apparatus is gaining entry to roadways or limited-height areas, the driver/operator must allow appropriate space ahead of the apparatus in order to avoid striking objects or to avoid extending apparatus into traffic lanes. (See Figure A-2-3.5.)

Driving Skill Check List

- Name_____
- ID_____
- Date____/____/_____
- Shift_____
- Rig_____
- Company Officer / Evaluator

_____

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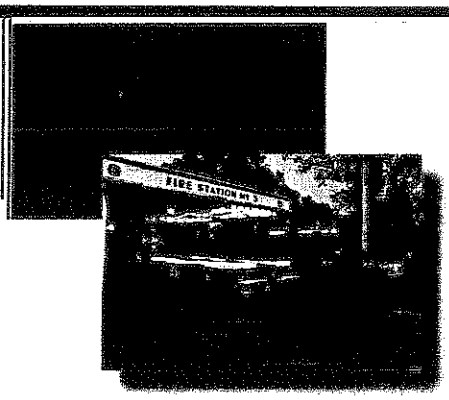
1. General responsibilities of the Driver, Y/N_____
2. Starting and Shutting Off Y/N_____
3. Use of Parking Break Y/N_____
4. Knowledge of Gauges and Switches Y/N_____
5. Driving Rules and Techniques, Non-Emergency and Emergency Y/N_____
6. Spotting Apparatus Y/N_____
7. Use of Lights and sirens Y/N_____
8. Apparatus Maintenance Y/N_____
9. Components of the Pump Panel Y/N_____
10. Understand adverse weather conditions Y/N_____
11. Understands traffic laws Y/N_____
12. Use of mirror and spotters Y/N_____
13. Understands defensive driving techniques Y/N_____
14. Demonstrate safe and controlled Y/N_____

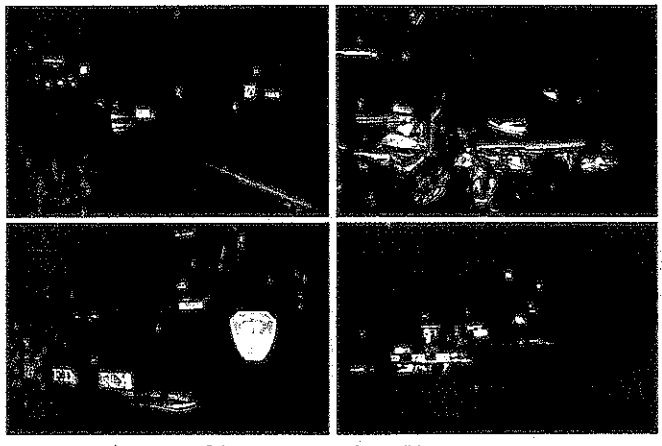


EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

By MICHAEL WILBUR

The Aftermath of a Fatal Apparatus Wreck: Patti's Story

Author's collection



The account of this apparatus accident will have a dramatic impact on anyone who reads it, but it should have an even more profound effect on anyone who drives an emergency vehicle.

I have been assigned to a truck company for most of my career in the New York City Fire Department. In 1994, however, I took a detail to drive the Safety Operating Battalion for about a year. My time there was certainly an interesting and eye-opening experience for me. One of the many duties of the Safety Operating Battalion was the investigation of all major apparatus accidents within the FDNY. In the early-morning hours of July 8, 1994, I responded to my first major accident with the Safety Operating Battalion, and that response changed my career and my life forever.

We responded to the Borough of Queens, to the Flushing section near Shea Stadium, the home of the New York Mets baseball team, and Flushing Meadows, site of the U.S. Tennis Association's National Tennis Center, where the U.S. Open tennis tournament is played. The accident involved an FDNY ladder truck responding as the second-due ladder company to what would turn out to be a false alarm, the second such alarm received from that location within a half hour. The time was around 2:30 A.M.

Michael Wilbur, a *Firehouse*© contributing editor, is a lieutenant in the New York City Fire Department, assigned to Ladder Company 27 in the Bronx, and has served for the past five years on the FDNY Apparatus Purchasing Committee. He has consulted on a variety of apparatus related issues throughout the country. For further information access his website at www.emergencyvehicleresponse.com.

It was determined in a post-crash analysis that the ladder truck had a red light and was going 20 mph as it entered the intersection and struck a small gray sports car that had the green light and was traveling at 30 mph. It was further determined that the ladder truck struck the car on the passenger's front quarter panel and proceeded to drag the car 77 feet down the street.

As we responded to the scene, all of those thoughts that run through a firefighter's mind were running through my mind. What might we have? How bad would it be? As we pulled up to the scene, it was a sea of emergency vehicles and we had to park quite far away. As I walked down the street toward the accident vehicles, I could see only the rear of each vehicle. Ironically, the first thing that I noticed on the gray civilian vehicle was a fire department union sticker (Uniformed Firefighters Association of the City of New York) displayed prominently in the rear window.

All of the sudden, my body was overcome with a sick feeling, one of those feelings that puts your guts in a knot. Yes, the fire apparatus, an FDNY ladder truck, had actually hit one of our own people. As I walked closer, it was obvious that we had done some real damage. I quickly learned that two civilians had been transported to the local trauma center in bad shape and that one of the victims, the driver, was the daughter of an FDNY fire marshal, and she would die a few days later.

I have a great belief in God, and I have always believed that things happen for a reason and that everyone on this earth is part of God's grand plan. I helped complete the investigation, finished my detail at the Safety Operating Battalion and was returned back to the firehouse within a year. Then, I was promoted to lieutenant and a short time later was assigned to my present assignment in the Bronx at Ladder Company 27.

A Twist of Fate

We now roll the clock ahead five years, when the fire department started what it called the "rotation program." Probationary firefighters would be assigned to a firehouse once they completed probie school, but after their first year, they would rotate to two other firehouses, generally in two different boroughs, to gain valuable experience in different parts of the city before being returned back to their originally assigned company. During this time, we received a rotated firefighter from Ladder 176 in Brooklyn to work a year in Engine Company 46, the engine housed with Ladder 27. His name was Tommy Daly.

At about the same time, I was summoned to the Corporation Coun-

sel, a city "think tank" of lawyers who spend all day defending the City of New York in lawsuits. My task that day was to appear before a Corporation Counsel lawyer to give a deposition in the Flushing accident case. It was in December, just before Christmas. I was informed that the case would probably go to trial in January and that I had better plan to be available to testify.

After my deposition, I went back to the firehouse and relieved my captain, and informed him that I might be tied up in court for the month of January. He asked why and I told him that it had to do with the Flushing wreck. He then informed me that the firefighter that we had gotten on the rotation a few months ago, Tommy Daly, was the brother of the woman who was killed in the accident. Like I said, God works in mysterious ways. I kept this secret for six months. In that time, I was never called to testify and later found out that the case had been settled out of court, as many of these cases are.

It was now July and I was headed out of the firehouse for the last time before my vacation started. I was about to get into my car when Tommy Daly approached me. He said to me, "You know people in the fire department. Could you find out what happened with that accident that had claimed the life of my sister?" We talked for a long time. I had liked Tommy since the moment I met him, he had such a presence and it became apparent to me in my first few months of knowing him that he was going to be a very good firefighter. He had all the right stuff.

Effects of a Tragedy

Tommy asked me whether I would be willing to meet with his Mom, which I agreed to. When we met, Joan Daly and I too talked for a long time. I asked her whether she would be willing to help prevent a similar occurrence and she said she would. She is a gutsy lady. She agreed, with her remaining daughters, to try to put pen to paper and put into words their family's experiences and emotions from that fateful day in July 1994 to the present.

I have on several occasions taken firefighter/operator accounts of serious or fatal apparatus wrecks and how they and their families were affected. This is the first time anywhere that I am aware of where the family of a victim of a fatal fire truck accident was willing to share the effects of their tragedy on their family with us, the fire service. This account will have a dramatic impact on anyone who reads it, but should have a profound effect on anyone who drives an emergency vehicle. Here is Patti's Story.

PATRICIA ANN DALY
2/23/1975 – 7/11/1994

On July 7, 1994, my 19-year-old daughter, Patricia Ann Daly, also known as Patti, left the house to meet her friends. She said, "Good night, Ma, see you later." I went to bed at my usual time. It was a hot summer night, so I put on my bedroom air conditioner. Sometime after midnight on July 8, the phone rang. Someone on the line said they were from New York University Hospital and they wanted to speak to me about Patti. I hung up on them, thinking my daughter Patti was home and asleep upstairs. The phone rang again and this time when I answered it I listened. They said Patti had been in a car accident and they needed permission to operate on her and remove a damaged spleen. I gave them permission and said I would be right there.

My husband and I left immediately for the hospital. During the short ride there, I kept thinking this was no big deal. People lived without a spleen. We were asked to go into a room and wait. Patti was in surgery. During the time we waited, several people came in to speak with us. I have very little memory of what they said. I just wanted to see my daughter. At some point during this waiting period, then-Fire Commissioner Howard Safir came in and spoke to us. It was at this time that I found out that Patti's car had been hit by a fire truck. Still, I was not aware how critical Patti's condition was. All I kept hearing was that Patti was stable. They didn't know how extensive her injuries were.

When I finally got to see Patti after her surgery, she was unconscious. I thought she just did not come out of anesthesia. It wasn't until much later that morning I was told she was in a coma. At this point, I wanted all my other children with me. I contacted Barbara, Thomas and Kathleen and again waited. We waited three days. Friends and relatives drifted in and out of the hospital. On July 11, more tests were done on Patti and we were told that Patti had a brain stem injury and there was no hope. Patti was declared brain dead and then she was gone.

The next days with the wake and funeral were again a blur. I don't remember much. What I do remember was my youngest child was dead. She had been killed in a car accident with a fire truck. We would later come to find out that the fire truck that killed my daughter was responding to a false alarm, the second of the night to that same location, which added to the incomprehensibility of it all. All I knew was that I was never going to see her again.

What the Witnesses Saw

After reviewing the police report and hearing witness accounts, we began to confirm what we thought all along: Patti was a responsible person who always did the right thing. She had recently purchased the car she was driving that night herself and was very proud of it. She took very good care of it and was a cautious driver. She was always the person who reminded others to put on their seatbelts. The police determined she was driving well within the speed limit, she had her windows rolled down, the radio was at a low volume and she had a green light, the right of way. Witnesses, both in her vehicle that night and strangers in the park located at the scene of the accident, said they did not recall hearing any sirens until the impact and did not recall observing any flashing emergency lights. Witnesses said the fire truck went through the red light while Patti was going through the green. They said that the fire truck did not stop or appear to slow down at the intersection when it approached the red light. I have come to learn that standard fire safety precautions indicate that when approaching an intersection where an emergency vehicle has to go through a red light, the emergency vehicle should slow down or come to a stop and make sure it is safe before proceeding through.

At the hospital, Patti was tested for drugs and alcohol and the tests came back negative. To the best of our knowledge, the driver of the truck was not tested for drugs or alcohol; if he was, the results were not released to our family or lawyers. Rumors were floated our way from various sources regarding the possible "condition" of the driver. We will never know if he was under the influence of alcohol or drugs and if it played a factor in my daughter's death. Why wasn't he tested? The available information seemed to

show that Patti did everything correctly that a driver possibly could. It became increasingly clear to us that the driver of the fire truck did not take the necessary safety precautions while operating an emergency vehicle. Was it because it was their second trip responding to a location where a false alarm had been called in previously that night?

A Call for Change

The next couple of months, I hurt so bad. I had a terrible pain in my chest that would not go away. I went through the motions of being alive. I didn't know what to do. I decided that no family should ever have to go through what we went through. I contacted a lawyer so that we could make a statement: The New York City Fire Department needed to change. They had to be held responsible for their actions.

Whenever I showed up for preliminary hearings and depositions, the men involved in the accident were all joking and laughing and talking among themselves. No one showed any remorse. At the deposition, the driver of the truck was questioned about the incident and he said, "I don't recall." When asked, "You don't recall?" he simply replied, "That happened almost three years ago, how could you expect me to remember that?" I thought, how could you not recall the day someone died as a result of your actions? My family and I have to remember it every minute of every day for the rest of our lives. I hated them for what they did to Patti. She was a healthy, happy, 19-year-old girl with so many years ahead of her.

As we waited several years for the case to come to court, I periodically attended meetings held by Compassionate Friends of Rockville Centre, a support group for parents who have lost children. In my grief, I wanted to reach out to others who were experiencing similar pain. With the help of two women who had also lost children, I co-founded Compassionate Friends of Flushing.

Life was going on for the rest of my family. My husband retired from the fire department as a fire marshal. My oldest daughter, Barbara, went through the FBI Academy and is now a Special Agent assigned to the New York Office. My son, Tom, went to the Fire Academy and was now assigned to Ladder 176 in Brooklyn. Patti's death was tearing me apart. I felt that there must be a bigger plan that I was not aware of. Maybe my son was in the fire department to make a difference. My daughter, Kathleen, attended Fordham University and had a full-time job and is currently a Surveillance Specialist for the FBI in New York City. Life was moving on for three of my children. My fourth and youngest daughter is gone at the young age of 19. Patti will never graduate from college, have a career, get married or have children. We will never share the events she might have accomplished and she will not be there to share ours. We will never see her smiling face or hear her playful laugh or feel her loving touch.

Not a day goes by when I am not reminded of that night when I lost my daughter. I live in the same neighborhood as the fire company that was involved in the accident. I see the truck that hit Patti's car on a daily basis. In 1999, five years after Patti was killed, my family discovered, through local newspaper coverage, that all 54 firefighters and officers stationed at the Flushing firehouse where the firefighters responsible for Patti's death worked were being transferred. This rare move was due in part to "poor performance and a lack of discipline there." (*The New York Times*, Metro Section, Oct. 27, 1999, page B1.)

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We learned that a firefighter assigned to this house was fired in 1997 after it was discovered he was calling in false alarms from a pay phone at the firehouse as part of a plan to further the disability claim of a co-worker. We learned that this firehouse went through a series of seasoned and experienced commanders who complained about how difficult it was to manage their subordinates there. We learned about the deliberate slower response time members of this firehouse took responding to medical calls. How could we not think they were complicit in Patti's death?

Apparently, questionable activities were going on at this firehouse for years and nothing was done about it. How am I supposed to believe that on the night of the accident the people in that truck followed proper procedures while responding to a false alarm? How am I supposed to believe that safety was the number-one priority at this firehouse if the entire house all the way to the top had not only their integrity questioned, but were transferred to other houses because they could not be trusted to carry out their routine duties in a responsible manner? All these important questions I may never know the answer to, but I can only speculate that my daughter may still be alive today and be celebrating her 30th birthday.

The City of New York settled our case out of court. A law was passed in 1996 called the Patti Daly Law, which makes it a felony (formerly a misdemeanor) if someone calls in a false alarm and a person dies as a result. The woman charged with calling in the false alarm the night Patti was killed spent less than a year in jail.

I only hope that today, more than 10 years later, safety is the number-one priority in all firehouses everywhere so that accidents such as Patti's can be avoided at all costs. It seems that the current FDNY commissioner, Nicholas Scoppetta, has a zero-tolerance policy for harmful behavior on or off the job, such as drinking and driving, and drug or alcohol abuse.

Someone told me once that everyone is put on earth for a reason and when they have accomplished what they were put here for, they go home. I feel that in Patti's short 19 years she must have done so much and touched so many lives. Patricia Ann Daly was a wonderful daughter, sister, friend and person, and no one can ever take that away from her. There will always be emptiness in our lives and our hearts.

I would like to thank the Daly family for their contribution to this month's column. Drive as if lives depend on it, because they do, and don't forget to buckle up.

Michael Wilbur will present "Anatomy of a Rollover Accident and How to Prevent Them" at Firehouse World 2005 in San Diego, Jan. 31-Feb. 4.